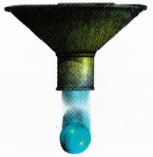

MAXIS
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# Marble DROP™

## The Mesmerizing Mindbending Marble Game

EVERYONE
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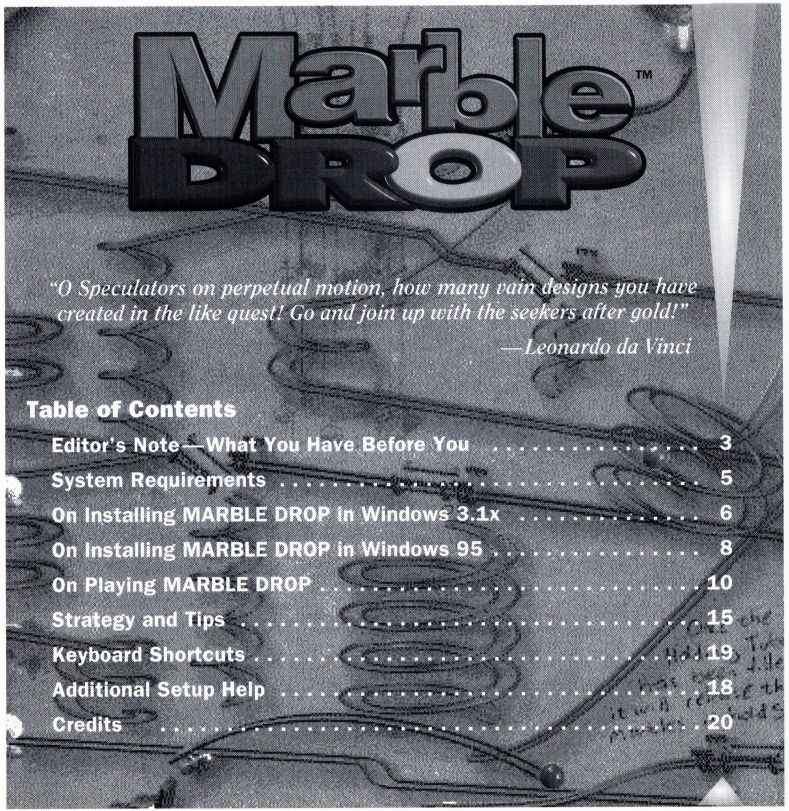
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MAXIS




*"O Speculators on perpetual motion, how many vain designs you have created in the like quest! Go and join up with the seekers after gold!"*

*—Leonardo da Vinci*

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## Editor's note—What you have before you:

Recently, during the reorganization of seemingly miles of boxes, chests and other stored and still uncatalogued knickknacks in the twisting labyrinth that makes up the non-publicly-accessed section of the Vatican Museum in Rome, there surfaced a certain chest of papers. Among them were the plans for a strange, multi-part perpetual-motion-powered puzzle machine. It is following these plans that we have rendered the puzzle so that you may work it on your computer screen—thus making real in the virtual manner that which would otherwise remain fantasy.

The plans are conspicuously dated 1 April, 1503. Whoever made the plans certainly wished for it to appear that they had been drawn by the master Leonardo da Vinci himself, but there are still doubts as to the authenticity of the notes. As near as we have been able to determine, the puzzle would only function properly if augmented by a perpetual motion engine. Or perhaps something more—attached to the manuscript was a brief note, as cryptic as it is compelling:

"The puzzles I have envisioned could not—indeed never will—exist in the physical world. It cannot be done. Man will fly; my flying machines will accomplish that. But the landscape I describe in my sketches of the puzzle machines of MARBLE DROP is a landscape that cannot be built with the tools I know, nor with any we are likely to find. Matter cannot move that way, cannot be transported, cannot sing with voices. But there tingles in the recesses of my mind an idea, that one day we will have at our disposal windows into entirely separate areas unknown to geography and unfettered by Galileo, where the rules will be as we set them. And so in my flight of fancy and daring I have written my description and instruction as if those tools for opening up and

displaying this other, virtual world were already manipulable and at our disposal. I am content that as the puzzles are likely never to be built until such time as we have such tools at our disposal, it is better that the instructions fit the student of tomorrow better than the student of today."

Luckily, at Maxis, we can provide such tools. The virtual world is indeed at our disposal, making the master's designs fully implementable.

Most helpful of all, of course, are the notes that follow, wherein the author, claiming to be the master, takes for granted that the puzzles have been built, and merely leaves us with a few thoughts on how the puzzles might best be worked out. And so we have built it, in the world that allows us to break the rules: the virtual one.



## System Requirements

My student came to me and asked, Master, what sort of system must I possess to run MARBLE DROP? And I answered:

The minimum system requirements are:

486 CPU, running at 66 MHz

Windows 95 or 3.1x

8MB RAM

20MB available hard drive space

2X or faster CD-ROM drive

Microsoft mouse or 100% compatible

SVGA graphics card, with at least 512K video RAM, that supports 640 x 480 resolution in 256 colors

*Note that these are but minimums, my student. For optimum performance I recommend running MARBLE DROP on a Pentium CPU, running at 90Mhz or above, with 16MB (or more) RAM, 50 free MB on your hard drive and a 4X or faster CD-ROM drive.*

## On Installing MARBLE DROP in Windows 3.1X[1]

My student came to me and said, Master, I am using Windows 3.1x, and wish to install MARBLE DROP. I said to him, proceed thusly:

1. Launch Windows 3.1x
2. Insert your MARBLE DROP CD into your CD-ROM drive
3. Open Program Manager
4. Open the File menu
5. Select Run
6. In your Run field, type **d:\install** and press **Enter**. (And if your CD-ROM drive be not d, but rather, e, or f, or some one of those sundry others, then enter the correct letter; be not so literal.)
7. Now hearken, student: The road before you goes three ways, for you have three installation choices. Your choice depends upon how much space you can spare on your hard drive.
   - Choice 1: The "small" option. Only 4MB will it take, but performance will not be optimal, and you will be consigned to loading your game from your CD forever.
   - Choice 2: The "medium" option. This is the option of freedom: the medium option allows you to use your best judgment, and choose the resolution that best fits your system. Of course, if you prefer to install as much of MARBLE DROP on your hard drive as you can, the best option is...
   - Choice 3: The "large" option. The whopping Sistine Chapel-sized option. I recommend it. Fully 85MB requires this option, but regret it you will not. You can use your CD as a coaster after choosing this option of installation.[2]
8. Having made your choice, follow the instructions on your screen. The process should take a few minutes.

To begin to play, locate the Maxis program group in Program Manager, and double-click on the MARBLE DROP Icon.

Now, my student. Your puzzle lies before you. It is time to begin. Move along to the section of this tome called On Playing MARBLE DROP, where we discuss the nature of things, and how to work MARBLE DROP.

[1] The title of this codex is remarkable to us. We think Leonardo had some sort of vision involving operating environments. Surprisingly, the instructions work, and we have left them as they were written. —ed.

[2] Leonardo's pithy attitude aside, using your CD as a coaster is not recommended. We recommend storing the CD in a cool, dry place, in case, through no fault of your own, your computer loses data, or your roof loses a shingle. —ed.

## On Installing MARBLE DROP in Windows 95

My student came to me and said, Master, I am using Windows 95, and wish to install MARBLE DROP. And I said to him, proceed thusly:

1. Start Windows 95. Sing! Sing to the moon![3]
2. Insert your MARBLE DROP CD in your CD-ROM drive
   - If your CD ROM drive supports AutoPlay, the Setup screen will appear before you.
   - If your CD ROM drive does not support AutoPlay, then click on the Start button, select Run, type in **d:\install** and click **OK** to make the Setup screen appear. (And if your CD ROM drive be not d, but rather, e, or f, or some one of those sundry others, then enter the correct letter; be not so literal.)
3. Now hearken, student: The road before you goes three ways, for you have three installation choices. Your choice depends upon how much space you can spare on your hard drive.
   - Choice 1: The "small" option. Only 4MB will it take, but performance will not be optimal, and you will be consigned to loading your game from your CD forever.
   - Choice 2: The "medium" option. This is the option of freedom: the medium option allows you to use your best judgment, and choose the resolution that best fits your system. Of course, if you prefer to install as much of MARBLE DROP on your hard drive as you can, the best option is...
   - Choice 3: The "large" option. The whopping Sistine Chapel-sized option. I recommend it. Fully 85MB requires this option, but regret it you will not. You can use your CD as a coaster after choosing this option of installation.[4]
4. Having made your choice, follow the instructions on your screen. The process should take a few minutes. When the installation is done, click OK to return to your normal desktop environment.

To begin to play, click the Start button, then choose Programs/Maxis/MARBLE DROP. If you installed either Choice 1 or 2, be certain to have the MARBLE DROP CD in your CD-ROM drive.

After MARBLE DROP has been run once from AutoPlay or installed from the CD, you can start MARBLE DROP from either the AutoPlay screen or the Start menu.

Now, my student. Your puzzle lies before you. It is time to begin. Move along to the section of this tome called On Playing MARBLE DROP, where we discuss the nature of things, and how to work MARBLE DROP.

[3] Singing to the moon, whatever that means, is not necessary for satisfactory installation. That would be silly. We recommend barking. Like a dog. Or a tree, if you prefer. —ed.

[4] Leonardo's pithy attitude aside, using your CD as a coaster is not recommended. We recommend storing the CD in a cool, dry place, in case, through no fault of your own, your computer loses data, or your roof loses a shingle. —ed.

## On Playing MARBLE DROP

In my pursuit of perpetual motion I have crafted many designs, and in my pursuit of this goal I have spent much time—in idle hours, between sketches and commissioned work—to imagine my perpetually-moving, world-manipulating machine finally existent and put to use. And what would we do if we had such a machine? How would our time best be spent, if we had machines that moved without ceasing, and other devices about which today I can only dream?

Would we find new ways to feed nations? Light entire cities? Perhaps. But I prefer to think we would, having solved so many mysteries, turn immediately to new ones: we would solve puzzles. And in so doing, our minds would sharpen, and we would ask more questions. So I have devised a series of increasingly difficult puzzles that depend upon perpetually-run lifts and other mechanical devices to operate. I have chosen to call the series of puzzles, all together, MARBLE DROP.

Through MARBLE DROP you will be challenged to explore the workings of different mechanical puzzles. In each puzzle you will be presented with funnels and variously-colored marbles and collection bins. Your objective is to solve the puzzle by dropping the marbles into the funnels in such a way as to fill the bins with the correctly colored marbles while losing as few marbles as possible.

My student, be not unduly self-aggrandizing[5] if you excel early on—I have designed my puzzles so that the difficulty level of the puzzles ranges from the relatively simple to the remarkably difficult. Needless to say, the puzzles can become quite challenging with the addition of various components like springs, cannons, lifts and freezers.

The solving of puzzles is a task for the thinking person—strategy is involved. Think of your marbles as soldiers you dispatch to war; traversing the machine, your marbles may survive and triumph, reflecting well upon you; or may die miserably, chopped to ignoble bits, also reflecting upon you, but not well. And if these marbles do not die well, 'twill be a black day for the king that led them to it.

### ON SELECTING A PUZZLE

You must first select the puzzle machine you will solve. At the beginning, you will fall naturally to the first puzzle, but you need not spend your time with this puzzle if you prefer not to do so, for it has forty-nine siblings. The choosing of puzzles is simple:

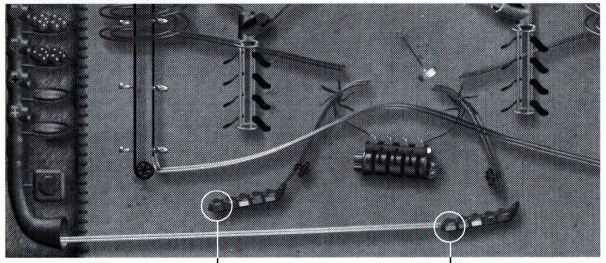
1. Open the Game menu, and choose Select Puzzle.
2. Choose the puzzle you want from the list.

The puzzles are listed in order from easiest to most difficult. In addition, each puzzle has a status icon. A red status icon denotes an untouched puzzle. A green status icon indicates a puzzle that has been started, yet not finished. A blue icon represents those puzzles that are solved and whose reason to live has been completed.

[5] We think Leonardo is telling his student not to get cocky. —ed.

## ON SELECTING YOUR FIRST MARBLE

Once you have chosen a puzzle, begin playing by selecting a marble with your mouse. Be sure to hold down the button[6] as you drag the marble to the funnel. **Warning: It is crucial to select a marble whose color matches the left-most slot of the bin you are trying to fill.**




Drop the marble into one of the start funnels at the top, and you will see, as the marble falls, whether you have correctly predicted the bin into which the marble will fall.

[6] Leonardo refers to "buttons" and dragging, seemingly indicating his anticipation of no less than an entire graphic-user-interface complete with an environment manipulable via a hand-held device "dragging" a visual approximation of program commands across a screen. This just trips us out. He also designed some really neat helicopters. —ed.



## ON CONTINUING YOUR PLAY

Puzzle-solving can be a trial-and-error process, but be not nervous. Relax, trust your faculties, and explore the workings of each puzzle—a well-designed machine is like an organism; its motions and reaction to stimuli (the addition of colored marbles) can be predicted if the machine is observed carefully.

On their way, marbles will be interrupted, accosted and attacked by a myriad of items placed in their path, including swinging mallets, cannons, teleporters and diverters, all of which may affect the path of the marble and even change the path itself.

You may put as many marbles into the puzzle as you desire—but if too many are in the puzzle at the same time (usually about 8, depending on the puzzle), a warning light will be activated. When the light goes on, slow down and give a few marbles a chance to find their way out of the puzzle. If you do not heed the warning light, all marbles within the puzzle will be destroyed.

And, dear student, recall that our business is the discovery of mysteries through exercise of the mind. To that end, I have placed a few secret, hidden puzzles, that may only be triggered through proper manipulation of the regular puzzle machines.

[7] Actually, we are willing to bet that your business involves something more prosaic, like the discovery of mysterious ways of getting paid for reading the comics on-line. We are especially willing to bet that the rest of your mind is being exercised by the mysteries one might discover on newsgroups with names like alt.binaries.fetish.leonardo. But we are willing to give Leonardo the benefit of a doubt, and hope you will play these magnificent puzzles, because they are challenging and diverting, and because they can fill the whole screen, thus hiding your newsgroups. (You do realize, by the way, the wonders of ALT-TAB?) —ed.

## IF YOU NEED MORE GUIDANCE

If you run into difficulties, you may at any time access the online Help system by simply pressing **F1**, or pulling down the Help menu. The Help Files are detailed and extremely useful, and provide descriptions of many of the mysterious components adorning the puzzles.

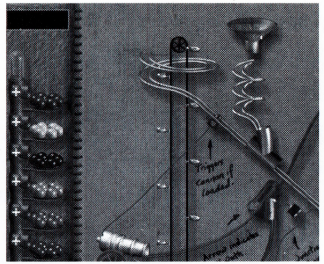
[8] OK. On-line help files? We are beginning to doubt the veracity of this so-called Leonardo. We think someone in Product Development is playing with our heads. —ed.



## On Strategy and Tips

Here are some pointers that will enable you to achieve higher scores and use fewer marbles:

1. PATIENCE—Take your time. Be patient! Watch where the marbles are going and which tracks are open to new marbles. This will help determine which marbles to select to drop into which funnel.
2. FOLLOW THE PATH—Take some time to map out the route the marble will take before dropping it in start funnel. Envision exactly where the marble will go when it is dropped by tracing the track all the way to exit bin. This is a time-consuming process, but it will pay off in higher scores and fewer wasted marbles. You have only so many marbles to lose, after all.
3. PUZZLE SPEED—You may adjust the speed of the puzzle by manipulating the speedometer at the bottom right of the screen, or by simply pressing + or -.
4. PURCHASING MARBLES—When starting a new game, you are given seven of each colored marble. As you progress to the more difficult puzzles, you may find it necessary to buy additional marbles. To purchase marbles, click on the Purchase Marble Button, designated by a "+" symbol located next to the reservoir whose color you would like to purchase. The color of the "+" will match the color of marbles in the reservoir. You will be "charged" (points deducted from your score) for each marble you purchase.




5. STEEL MARBLES—Even among marbles there are those who seem to fill no purpose but to act as cannon fodder. If you find you must sacrifice a marble to trip a switch, change a diverter, be destroyed or be caught in an infinite loop, consider purchasing a Steel Marble. Steel marbles cost 100 points. It is a far better thing to lose a steel marble than to risk destroying a colored marble, which carries a price of 500 points, or even a black marble, which will curl your hair at a market price of 1500 points.[9] Note that steel marbles cannot be painted—they will pass right through a painter and retain their steel color.
6. TIMING—Sometimes a puzzle cannot be solved without losing marbles unless you time the release of the marble just so. Dropping a second marble into the puzzle while the first is still going through may be the only way to complete the puzzle with minimum losses and maximum points.
7. BLACK MARBLES—The black marble is a transforming marble, which takes on, chameleon-like, the color of the marble needed to solve the puzzle. The black marble is very expensive (1500 points) and should only be used as a last resort. If for some reason you can't seem to figure out a puzzle and are losing too many marbles, purchase a few of these "chameleons" and drop them in. There is one glaring exception to the chameleon effect: BLACK MARBLES CANNOT FILL THE STEEL MARBLE SLOT IN AN EXIT BIN.
8. BE EFFICIENT—If the Puzzle only requires red, blue and yellow marbles, don't drop purple marbles into the puzzle—they will be destroyed and you will lose points.

*Your servant—and yet your Master as well,*

*Leonardo*

*1 April, 1503*

[9] Unless you have no hair, in which case it will curl your toes. —ed.

[10] Well, duh. —ed.

## Keyboard Shortcuts[11]

These commands will be accomplished using your keyboard. Some of these have already been mentioned in this book, but they are indexed below for speedy reference:

- F1—Access Help Menu
- F2—New Game. This command brings the player to the first puzzle, after which the player may select a new puzzle if desired.
- F3—Pause/Resume
- F4—Toggle between full screen/window
- F11—Save Game. You can save up to 10 separate games. Game names may have 30 characters or less.
- F12—Load Game. This loads any previously saved game, picking up where you left off.
- + and - — Speed up and slow down the puzzle

[11] This short codex was found in the same box as the other, longer works regarding Leonardo's designs. Here, Leonardo anticipates function keys. (Also discovered were intricate plans for a vehicle that, once set in motion, would wait for the owner to feel confident, at which point it would sputter and stall. Called the Abort/Retry/Fail, the project went nowhere.) We just slap ourselves silly when forced to consider the brilliance of the master in his amazing anticipation. In fact, we slap ourselves silly without being forced. —ed.



## Additional Setup Help

(The Editor intrudes, Leonardo's helpful instructions notwithstanding.)

The installation and startup procedure have been designed to be as trouble-free and user-friendly as possible. If you yet have any trouble setting up or starting MARBLE DROP, access the online help menu (F1), or take a look at the ReadMe file on the CD for late breaking information. If neither of these venues should yield the desired response, call or fax Maxis Customer Service/Technical Support. Before you call, we would appreciate it if you would take a few preliminary steps to ensure that we may help you as quickly and efficiently as possible.

1. If calling about a technical matter concerning the software, please be sitting in front of your computer and have your CD within easy reach. It will be easier to talk you through it that way.
2. Have as much information as possible about the problem(s) you are having. This includes a detailed description of the problem, the steps you had followed prior to the problem, any other software you may be running in the background, and any error messages you have received.
3. It also helps to have information about your computer set-up, including what kind of operating system you use, how much RAM you have, how much hard drive space you have to spare, and what types of sound and video cards you are running.

We will do our best to help you solve the problem, but please be patient. Thank you.

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